6: Hart E-5 (1928-1930) 1954 OI20 Tiwi OI20

were words like "insecure" and "uneasy." He was not particularly aggressive nor particularly submissive, but he fluctuated between the two attitudes. One got the impression after associating with him that he was never sure of what was expected of him and acted therefore in contradictory ways according to what *he thought* was expected of him. Or to put the same impression another way, there seemed a constant discrepancy between what people expected of Antonio and what he wanted to do if left alone. In tribal fights, for instance, he acted fiercely and aggressively and with the air of swaggering braggadocio that that all important men are expected to show in fighting, yet at the earliest possible moment he melted into the crowd with visible relief at being able to quit the center of the stage and without a trace of rancor or ill will toward any of the people whom he had been abusing or had been abused by a few minutes before. In council meetings of senior men he was always listened to with respect yet always had to be prodded into speaking at all. He never initiated a policy or offered his opinion until pressure was put upon him to state what he thought, and while his opinion when given was listened to with attention it was always a paraphrase of some opinion already given, usually the majority opinion of the group. He expressed what he thought the group wanted him to say, never an "opinion of his own." In this respect Antonio had many of the characteristics of a "yes-man" and like his counterparts in more civilized societies he seldom took the unpopular side and seldom stood up to opposition.

Two burning political issues agitating the Tiwi in 1928–30 were the issues of (1) plural marriage and (2) the visits of the Japanese pearling luggers. The Catholic missionaries had taken a strong stand on plural marriages and were bringing all the economic and moral pressure they could exert on the younger Tiwi to induce them to restrict themselves to one wife. Failure to bow to Mission pressure resulted in the recalcitrant's being cut off from the European food, tobacco, clothes, etc. which could only be obtained through the Mission. But beginning in the middle 1920's Japanese pearling boats in ever increasing numbers had carried on the practice of anchoring on the further side of Melville Island during the period of high tide (when diving for pearl shell was impossible) and inviting the natives to provide their women as prostitutes for the use of the crews during their stay on the beaches. The Japanese captains paid lavishly in European goods for any women thus provided and the subtribes on the southeast side of Melville, in particular the subtribe called the Yeimpi, proved very susceptible to the Japanese temptations.

These two issues of plural marriage and prostitution for the Japanese rather neatly complemented each other at two points. Not only did the Japanese rival the Mission station as a source of supply for European goods; the possession of a large number of wives was a condition that made a man very unpopular with the missionaries, but, if he were disposed to rent out some of them, made the same man very popular with the Japanese. The plural marriage issue, if alone, would clearly have divided the tribe into the conservatives, staunchly upholding plural marriage as the Tiwi way, and the radicals abandoning it in return for Mission favor. But such an alignment was cut right across

6: Hart E-5 (1928-1930) 1954 OI20 Tiwi OI20

by the Japanese issue, since it tempted the conservative with several wives to violate all the old tribal sanctions by renting out his wives, and it provided the Mission adherent radicals with a grand opportunity to pose as the real defenders of the old culture and to charge the old polygamists with being the real renegades from the ancient ways.

It can be easily guessed how high feelings ran on these issues and how hotly they were debated when a number of Tiwi gathered together. But on neither of these issues or on any aspect of them did Antonio show any signs of leadership. He accumulated wives but always apologized in a rather deprecating and apple-polishing way when he met the missionaries, and spent part of his time hanging around the Mission despite the contemptuous attitude which the missionaries adopted toward him. He thus contrasted very unfavorably with some of his contemporaries, notably one Dooley who, having been for years a one-wife man and a Mission favorite, inherited a second wife at around the age of forty. Dooley's decision was clear-cut and highly spectacular. He accepted the second wife, shook the dust of the Mission station from his feet and never set foot near it again, taking up again the traditional life of a Tiwi elder, deep in the bush, with his two wives and later additions, ignoring all white innovations, even tobacco.[4] Dooley's uncompromising behavior was greatly admired by the tribe but few had the strength of character to emulate him, certainly not Antonio.

On the Japanese issue Antonio was just as vacillating. Prodded by others to make a statement he would in ringing tones denounce as disgraceful and scandalous the behavior of the Yelmpi wife-renters, but on his visits to the Yelmpi country ostensibly "to see for himself what was going on" he shared eagerly in the proceeds of vice which his friends there offered him and was even heard on a few occasions to wonder aloud why the Japanese always went to the Yelmpi country when there were plenty of secluded beaches in Tiklauila country. Instantly challenged, "Would you want the Japanese to come here?" "Would you rent your wives to them if they did?" poor Antonio quickly turned it into a feeble joke, saying deprecatingly, "Oh no, no, no. I just wondered why they always go to those ugly Yelmpi women?"

In summary we might say that Antonio's personal behavior appeared to be that of a man pushed into a position rather too big for him to fill. He was not by nature particularly aggressive or domineering, but as the eldest son of Turimpi he was constantly being pushed by public opinion onto the center of the stage, whereas he would have been much happier if public opinion had left him alone to be an ordinary, average member of the crowd. The role he was called on by his status position to play seemed to give him little or no pleasure, little or no personal satisfaction. Such a view of his "personality" is supported by the fact that when alone in the bush with his own family and away from the society of his peers Antonio was relaxed and at ease. As Durkheim pointed out, the basic factor in Australian social psychology is that men spend a great part of their lives hunting and collecting in the bush, completely out of physical contact with all people except members of their own households,

6: Hart E-5 (1928-1930) 1954 OI20 Tiwi OI20

portunities for cultural comparison he at the same time acquired an acute insight into his own culture and into the psychology of his fellow tribesmen. For the anthropologist he was a magnificent informant and a continuous pain in the neck. As increasing years gave him increasing tribal seniority, Mariano became increasingly domineering and touchy about his own importance and increasingly recognized by the younger men as the man who voiced the "pro-mission" and hence "pro-white" point of view in tribal arguments. However, it would be a mistake to think of him as the "detribalized" native of the literature (as another Benelong, e.g., in the magnificent study of culture contact given by the Australian novelist Eleanor Dark, 1941). On the contrary the tough old unacculturated natives who lived deep in the bush and who tried to act much of the time as if white men didn't exist not only accepted Mariano but respected him and paid deep attention to his arguments. The reasons why they did this are, I think, all considerations of "personality," that is, they respected Mariano despite his collaboration with the Mission largely because Mariano was the kind of man he was. He was forceful and determined; he was sincere, he was consistent both in word and in deed, he was intelligent and knew both the psychology of his audience and how to marshal his arguments so as to obtain maximum impact from his material. And he had supreme confidence in his own righteousness. Time and again one was struck by the contrast between him and his elder brother Antonio. When Antonio spoke (always after being prompted or coerced into giving his opinion), people listened hoping to hear wisdom and force and cogency; instead they heard only hackneyed phrases and inconsistent arguments which left them dissatisfied and unconvinced. When Mariano spoke (always without invitation and frequently ahead of many of his seniors), he laid down, in vehement tones, a definite policy, and even though his policy was unacceptable to his hearers as it frequently was, they listened with close attention and voiced their approval at the end, not so much of the policy he outlined as the directness and clearness of the delivery and the logic of his position.

The difference between the two men is well illustrated by their attitudes toward the Japanese wife-renting on the Yeimpi beaches. On this, the burning issue of the day, Antonio never took a stand but shilly-shallied on all sides of it, despite the fact—frequently drawn to his attention—that his small daughter was betrothed to an old Yeimpi who was a notorious wife-renter and he, therefore, in a very short time would be faced with the decision of whether to hand the girl over to her promised husband or not. Mariano on the contrary seized upon the Japanese issue from its first appearance as proof of the essential soundness of the Mission campaign against plural marriages. His speeches were clear-cut and definite. "It all goes to show that the priests are right when they say that having a lot of wives is a bad thing. These old Yeimpi have too many wives. If they had only one each, like white men (and inferentially like Mariano himself), they would not be doing this disgusting thing of renting out their wives to Japanese, they would want to keep their one wife to themselves like decent Tiwi." Most of his hearers (a) considered themselves decent Tiwi, but

6: Hart E-5 (1928-1930) 1954 OI20 Tiwi OI20

(b) had each a number of wives at home, (c) had not rented any to the Japanese as yet (mainly because of lack of opportunity), but (d) were all suspecting each other of contemplating an early trip to the Yelmpi country and therefore were in chronic indecision on the whole matter. Hence Mariano's arguments were greeted with the applause that any group of people caught among a complicated set of moral alternatives will give to one of their number who has solved for himself the conflicts that beset them and has solved them moreover in a way perfectly consistent with all his previous attitudes. It was the applause and approval that is expressed in our culture by some such phrase as "I may not agree with him but at least he is sincere and you always know where he stands."

But like similar people elsewhere Mariano inspired no close intimate loyalty. Nobody felt warmly toward him. The missionaries used him but didn't like him, the anthropologist found him invaluable as an informant but intensely irritating in his self-importance and his belief in his own indispensability; among the natives he had no intimates and no close friends. His relations with his wife were much more formal and distant than was usual among monogamous couples and she frequently criticized him both in public and in private for what she called his "failure to talk to her"—undoubtedly the Tiwi equivalent of the American wife's complaint against her husband's absorption in business or politics. He was fond of his children but played with them little and then in a silent, brooding sort of way, confining his caresses to tickling and squeezing them, unlike Antonio whose play with his children was always carried on in an endless flow of chatter and two-way conversations. Child-talk, one surmises, was beneath Mariano's dignity.

All in all, Mariano was a forceful, domineering, self-important, introverted man, pursuing his dedicated way as the leader of a cause—collaboration with and imitation of the whites—but having personality traits which prevented him from inspiring any of the affection or warm devotion that other types of leaders inspire. There were many Tiwi, especially among the younger men, who were ready and willing to adopt at least the easier aspects of white culture such as clothes, work in Darwin, disrespect for tribal laws, violation of taboos, but in no sense can they be described as Mariano's followers, still less his admirers. Everyone respected Mariano, everybody consulted him, everybody made use of him and listened to him, but nobody warmed to him. He was as ambitious, as domineering, as aggressive, as humourless, as dedicated, as admirable as one of the Old Testament prophets—and just as difficult to like.

LOUIS

Of the five sons of Turimpi, it may be that the two who were most similar in whatever it is that is called personality were the second and third sons, Mariano and Louis. Both were "lonely ones," both had about them a kind of gloomy, inward-focused aura which inhibited warm friendly relations with others. Among a people to whom laughter and gaiety come easily, both were completely devoid of humor. Both were men dedicated to a cause, but in the